

A 'tight spot'

Miner trapped 13 hours after roof fall

Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W. Va. — A coal miner trapped 13 hours under tons of rock said yesterday that he prayed and thought about his family because he figured he was in a "tight spot."

"I didn't know whether they were going to get me out or not," said William Epling, 52, of Sharples. Epling was trapped in a 4-by-4-foot space under the canopy of a mining machine after a 50-foot section of the mine roof collapsed about 2 a.m. Tuesday.

"I thought this might be my way to go. I knew I was in a pretty tight spot."

Rescue crews reached Epling about 3 p.m., and the miner emerged from the Armco No. 9 Twilight mine in Boone County with just bruises and scratches.

Epling said he was helping cut the last coal out of a seam when the roof fell.

"It fell so quick that the only thing I saw was coal flaking in front of me," he said.

"I was hollering and pounding on the canopy as soon as it happened to let them know I was there," he said. "I could hear them (fellow miners) using a

scoop, but after a while they stopped and brought in another continuous miner from another section."

Although he could hear his colleagues working, Epling said, he allowed himself only cautious optimism.

"I didn't know whether they were going to get me out or not," he said. "A man never knows about anything like that."

Epling said he was trapped once before by a roof fall, for about 90 minutes, but escaped injury that time too.

1983 William Epling rescued 13 hours after roof fall occurs in Boone County

Clipped By:



usmra_rob

Thu, Jul 8, 2021